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PRESIDENT CRITICIZES INTELLIGENCE EFFORT ON CRISIS PREDICTION

Memo to Top Aides Said to Arise
Mainly From C.I.A. Failure to
Warn of Turmoil in Iran

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22 — President Carter, in a handwritten memorandum to his top advisers on national security, has complained about the ability of the Administration's intelligence branches to forecast foreign political developments, such as the recent turmoil in Iran.

Administration officials disclosed today that the President had made his complaints in a memorandum sent on Nov. 11 to Adm. Stansfield Turner, the Director of Central Intelligence; to Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance and to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Mr. Carter's assistant for national security.

The officials said the main impetus behind the memo was the apparent failure of the Central Intelligence Agency to predict the widespread unrest in Iran and to provide policymakers with information on the political opposition that suddenly challenged the rule of Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi. The Iran episode is described, however, as only the most recent of several cases in which the White House has questioned C.I.A. performance.

"Dissatisfied With the Quality"

In the memo, Mr. Carter is said to have told the top officials he was "dissatisfied with the quality of political intelligence" prepared for his use and to have urged them to discuss ways of improving the collection and analysis of information on political developments abroad.

Top officials have long complained about the inadequacy of intelligence reports on volatile political situations. During the Nixon-Ford years, Henry A. Kissinger, then Secretary of State, repeatedly criticized the Central Intelligence Agency for failing to alert the White House to potential crises. But Mr. Carter's memo is considered by experienced officials to be virtually unique in the level of criticism, and several said it implied heavy criticism of Admiral Turner's performance at the agency.

Mr. Carter's memorandum raises long-

the prime responsibility for monitoring political developments, the Central Intelligence Agency or the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and how their responsibilities should be divided. At the same time, it is also said to reflect the failure of top aides to integrate intelligence efforts and to make them more responsive to policymakers. This was a priority last year when Mr. Carter announced his reorganization of the intelligence establishment.

Although the memo does not single out the C.I.A., it was widely believed within the Government that the thrust of Mr. Carter's criticism was directed at Admiral Turner, who is responsible not only for the agency but also for all the Administration's intelligence efforts.

Officials of the agency deny that it alone is being held responsible for the lack of warning on Iran, and the memo has thus set off recriminations throughout the intelligence establishment. Agency officials argue that Admiral Turner has been made into a "scapegoat" on Iran, while officials elsewhere argue that the agency is trying to shift blame to other agencies.

The Congressional intelligence committees are also involved in the debate. The Senate panel is now investigating the alleged inadequacy of the C.I.A.'s reporting on Iran. Committee aides confirmed that the committee had received a copy of agency intelligence estimates, completed just as rioting broke out in Iran in August, that concluded that the Shah faced no substantial internal threats.

Aides to the House Intelligence Committee said a similar study is likely to be undertaken soon, with emphasis to be placed on C.I.A. abilities to warn of impending crises. An aide said an earlier investigation of the problem revealed "chaos" within the agency, which evidently prompted Admiral Turner to create a special post in August for forecasting political crises.

Administration officials said that in addition to the case of Iran, other recent episodes have provoked White House irritation over the agency's performance. An instance, they said, is the apparent failure to predict a large Rhodesian military offensive against Zambia last month, which coincided with talks between Prime Minister Ian D. Smith of Rhodesia and Mr. Vance in Washington. The offensive, which began on the day that Mr. Smith agreed to a conference of all parties involved in the Rhodesian dispute, badly embarrassed the Administration because it was viewed by some African leaders as having American support.

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